



The CENTER for
VICTIMS of TORTURE

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**The Center for Victims of Torture Responds to Report of APA Leaders' Collusion with
Department of Defense Interrogation Program**

St. Paul, MN – Findings in a newly-released report confirming that leaders in the American Psychological Association colluded with the Department of Defense in its post-9/11 interrogation program are “deeply disturbing, though not surprising given the amount of information already in the public domain regarding these allegations,” said Andrea Northwood, Ph.D, psychologist and CVT director of client services.

“We applaud the work of many who have steadfastly pursued the truth in this matter, and join with other human rights organizations in calling for full accountability for individuals who have facilitated torture. We especially ask the APA for acknowledgement of the harm caused to detainees,” said Dr. Northwood.

This new [report](#), which the APA requested in 2014, found a pattern of APA leaders vetting ethical guidelines past personal contacts at the Department of Defense to support psychologists’ participation in harsh interrogations, which ultimately enabled and legitimized use of torture methods such as waterboarding (a mock execution technique involving repeated experience of drowning), stress positions, sensory overload and sleep deprivation. Investigators noted that the motivation for APA leaders’ collusion was to “curry favor” with the Department of Defense and to eliminate restraints on the use of psychology for interrogative purposes.

In response, the APA [stated](#) that it will work to repair the damage done to its reputation and members, including steps to prohibit psychologists from participating in interrogations, to reevaluate its ethics processes and to return to its core values to “do no harm” and promote human rights.

Dr. Northwood said “At CVT, we work every day with individuals who are taking extremely painful steps to restore their lives after experiencing torture, including the types of torture shown to be used during CIA interrogations. Survivors come to CVT after suffering deep psychological and spiritual wounds wrought by torture. And for 30 years at CVT, survivors have courageously worked to restore their hope and peace of mind. As a result, there is a lot of hard-earned, senior clinical expertise in this country on the profound, lasting effects of torture should APA choose to enlist such expertise in its effort to prevent this from happening again. To re-orient itself with a mission of healing and protecting human dignity, the APA will need to make significant systemic changes to separate themselves from the governmental influence that compromised their moral judgment and ability to protect human rights.”

The APA also stated its interest in providing training to military or other law enforcement investigators regarding psychological effects of interrogation tactics on individuals. Dr. Northwood commented “CVT invites the American Psychological Association to begin a conversation with clinical experts who have made it their life’s work to understand and repair the damage caused by torture and abusive interrogation techniques.”

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The Center for Victims of Torture is a nonprofit organization based in St. Paul, Minn. dedicated to healing torture survivors and advocating for an end to torture. www.cvt.org